



NEWS RELEASE

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CANDIDATES SOLICITED FOR NATIONAL BOARD ON RURAL AMERICA *Board will help promote business and community development in rural areas*

WASHINGTON, July 5, 2002 – Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced that USDA is accepting applications for the newly created National Board on Rural America. Responsibilities of the board include developing a national strategic investment plan for rural America and overseeing the delivery of planning and innovation grants to regional boards.

“Continuing to strengthen America’s rural communities is an important priority for the Bush Administration,” said Veneman. “This board will provide valuable input as we examine ways to expand opportunities and investment in rural areas throughout the nation.”

The National Board, which consists of 14 members appointed by the Secretary with staggered four-year terms, was created with the recent passage of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. The Board will oversee the Rural Strategic Investment Program, which includes \$95 million of planning and community development grants.

Among those considered for Board positions will be representatives of: nationally recognized entrepreneurship organizations, regional planning and development organizations, community-based organizations, elected members of county governments, elected members of State legislatures, the rural philanthropic community, and Indian tribes.

Recommendations by elected members of federal, state, or county governments, and nominations from organizations will be accepted. Nominations from individuals will not be considered. Nominations should be written on the organization’s letterhead. An AD Form 755, Nominee Background Information, is required for each nominee and is available on the USDA Rural Development web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/farmbill2002.html>.

Completed applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on July 19, 2002. Applications should be submitted to the Office of the Under Secretary, Rural Development, ATTN: Duane Ischer, 1400, Independence Avenue, S.W., Room 206-W, STOP 0107, Washington, D.C. 20250-0107. To ensure timely delivery, applications may be faxed to (202) 720-2080.

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